

A TIME-Louis Harris Poll

Americans on the War: Divided, Glum, Unwilling to Quit

NEARLY five years after the 1965 buildup, Americans are increasingly impatient for a way out of Viet Nam, skeptical about the outcome of the fighting and ambivalent about the means of ending it. More than a third of the public want immediate, unconditional withdrawal of U.S. forces—a sizable figure in support of a policy that until recently was overwhelmingly held to be unthinkable and disastrous.

Yet, considering the outpouring of antiwar feeling on Moratorium Day, it is remarkable how much support remains for the policy of ending the war in honorable fashion, short of complete abandonment of

Still, reports Harris, a mood of pessimism—not unlike that of France following its 1954 debacle in Indo-China—pervades the country. “The irony,” says Harris, “is that the American mood is as pessimistic as it is without a Dienbienphu.”

The results of the poll demonstrate the extent to which the war has divided the American people. The country's leadership group, for the most part, is far more impatient about the war, far more cynical about the prospects of peace, than the general public. Antiwar sentiment is higher among blacks than whites, more pronounced among the young than the old, stronger in the East and West than the South and Midwest.

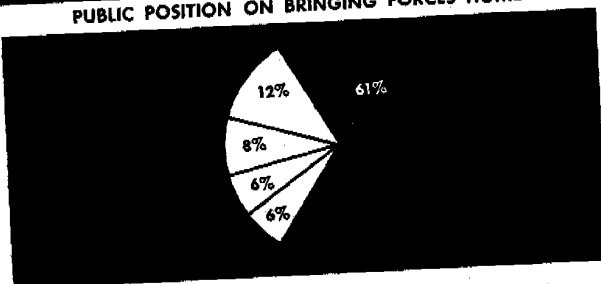
Support for the President

Overall, Nixon has gained rather than lost ground recently. Nixon's positive rating on the conduct of the war jumped ten points from a low of 35% in September to 45% on Oct. 14, the last day of interviewing for the poll and the day before the Viet Nam moratorium. Yet 50% of the general public and 53% of the leaders gave him a negative rating, proving that he is still highly vulnerable on the war issue. Nixon's handling of the negotiations to end the war won him no more kudos. Only 45% of the general public and 43% of the leaders approved his handling of the negotiations, while 49% of the public and 53% of the leaders gave him negative marks.

Is Nixon following the policies of the Johnson Administration in Viet Nam?

The people say no. Sixty percent of the total public and 53% of the leadership group believe that Nixon

PUBLIC POSITION ON BRINGING FORCES HOME



South Viet Nam. The President enjoys considerable support; a majority backs him on the rate of troop withdrawal and on the matter of self-determination for South Viet Nam.

Seeming contradictions abound in the American mood. Four-fifths of the nation profess to be “fed up and tired of the war”; yet half do not want to see the U.S. “cut and run” from Southeast Asia, and more than half believe the present pace of troop withdrawals is about right or too fast. Nearly half of the public would favor continued withdrawal even if it meant collapse of the Saigon government, and more than 40% feel that the country will probably go Communist despite U.S. efforts. Yet a majority still hope to preserve a non-Communist regime in Saigon.

These are findings of a new TIME-Louis Harris poll to determine how much support exists among Americans for the war and for alternatives in pursuing or ending it. In order to identify the differences between the general public and those expected to be better informed on the war's complexities, the TIME-Harris interviewers polled two samples—1,650 members of a cross section of the entire population and 1,118 national and community leaders. The second group included only public officials, chiefs of minority and dissident organizations, business executives, editors, leaders of educational and voluntary institutions—those whose collective voice registers loudest in public debate.

The results suggest that growing impatience with the war—especially among the leaders—could undermine President Nixon's efforts to carry out a program of controlled disengagement. But they also show that Nixon has managed to win broad support for two crucial points of his Viet Nam policy—withdrawal of American troops pegged to “Vietnamization” of the war, and holding out for the right of South Vietnamese self-determination. Fully three-quarters of the public polled favor the President's program of troop withdrawals. But half of the general public would be willing to back Nixon in one last attempt to escalate and win.

Do you favor immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Viet Nam?

	Public			Leaders		
	Favor %	Oppose %	Not Sure %	Favor %	Oppose %	Not Sure %
Nationwide	45	47	8	32	61	7
East	45	47	8	40	61	9
Midwest	30	63	7	34	59	7
South	33	57	10	21	74	5
West	33	60	7	33	64	3
Cities	47	48	5	36	58	6
Suburbs	33	61	6	31	61	8
Towns and rural	31	59	10	18	74	8
Under 30	35	58	7	34	59	7
30 to 49	24	59	17	27	67	6
50 and over	38	51	11	27	67	6
White	34	58	8	X	X	X
Black	50	41	9	X	X	X
Republicans	28	64	8	X	X	X
Democrats	38	54	8	X	X	X
8th grade	39	52	9	X	X	X
High School	34	58	8	X	X	X
College	36	53	11	X	X	X
Public Officials	X	X	X	23	70	7
Minority and dissident leaders	X	X	X	69	24	7
Communications leaders	X	X	X	25	69	6
Business leaders	X	X	X	26	66	8
Education and religious leaders	X	X	X	33	59	8
Voluntary organizations	X	X	X	31	63	6

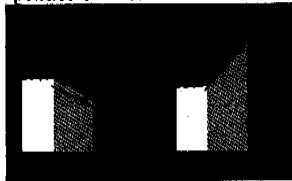
has broken with his predecessor to follow his own policy in Southeast Asia.

The President's plan to bring home the troops has strong support throughout the country. When asked directly, 76% of both the public and the leaders agreed, at least in principle, with the Nixon policy on troop withdrawals. But pressure to step up their pace seems likely to intensify. Only 6% of the public thought the withdrawals were proceeding too quickly, while 49% found the pace "about right"; 29%, however, felt the pace too slow. Among leaders, the pressure is even stronger. Although 39% were satisfied with the rate at which American manpower was being pulled out of Viet Nam, only 4% thought things were moving too rapidly, while 38% felt they were going too slowly.

How quickly should the troops be withdrawn?

Thirty-six percent of the public and 32% of the leaders favored immediate, total withdrawal of U.S. troops

Q: Is Nixon following Johnson's policies on Viet Nam?



from Viet Nam. Of several hypothetical situations that might justify an immediate U.S. pull-out, only a seizure of the Vietnamese government by hard-line generals determined to fight indefinitely found a majority willing to back an instant U.S. withdrawal. The majority of Americans and their leaders favored phased withdrawals. "It's too late to suddenly just drop it," said Mrs. James A. Deines of Bird City, Kans. "The only alternative we've got left is to end it as honorably and as quickly as possible." Sixty-one percent of the public and 58% of the leaders believed that an American pull-out should be timed according to increasing South Vietnamese strength—though patience with the Vietnamization effort is strictly limited.

How strong is the commitment to withdrawal?

Forty-seven percent of the public would follow a pre-arranged withdrawal timetable, even if the Saigon government were to collapse as a result; only 38% would alter the schedule to save the Thieu regime. Among leaders, the commitment is even firmer: 56% opted to pull out in the face of a government disaster; only 31% agreed to stay.

As the poll makes clear, Nixon could buy more time and support for his program of troop withdrawal by turning the fighting over to volunteers. Fifty-two percent of the public favored a voluntary force for Viet Nam; 46% of the leaders were willing to go along. Most would be willing to leave a volunteer army in Viet Nam for another year.

Although few people seem to be thinking in terms of a specific time limit for an end to U.S. involvement in Viet Nam, well under a majority of either the public or the leaders were willing to let the President maintain existing troop strength for more than a year. No more than 23% of the public and 18% of the leaders agreed to leave troops at the present 500,000 level for more than a year, although 10% were willing to keep them there for as long as five years. Nor are many more willing to tolerate what is reported to be the President's fallback position on troop reductions. Only 27% of the public and 25% of the leaders agreed to keeping a substantially lower 200,000-troop level in Viet Nam beyond next fall. By much the same proportions, Americans rejected the long-term use of a mixed force of volunteers and draftees. Just 28% of the public and 27% of the leaders agreed to keep a mixture of 125,000 volunteers and 75,000 draftees in Southeast Asia for more than a year. However, 37% of the public and 33% of the leaders were willing to leave a 200,000-man all-volunteer force in Viet Nam for at least two more years, and 16% were agreeable to letting them stay for five.

Changing Attitudes on the War

Fully 80% of the public and 81% of the leadership group are simply tired of the war. They feel that it was a mistake to begin with, and has been a needless waste of lives. Said Harris: "The basic rationale and justification for the Vietnamese war are rapidly fading from the consciousness of the people." Where two years ago 83% of the public agreed that the war was necessary to resist Communist aggression in Asia, today only 55% of the general public and 49% of the leadership accept this explanation. Even fewer said that Viet Nam is crucial to U.S. interests. Only 41% of the public and 32% of the leadership agreed with the proposition that the war is necessary to guarantee national security.

The public and the leaders held divergent views on both the necessity for "saving face" and the firmness of the U.S. commitment to remain in Southeast Asia. Half of the public accepted the idea that the U.S. has placed its reputation on the line in Viet Nam and could not leave until it had assured South Vietnamese independence; 54% of the leaders disagreed. Nearly half (48%) of the public went along with the proposition that the U.S. presence in Viet Nam was a commitment not just to the Vietnamese, but to the world; 54% of the leaders rejected this, too.

Has this new mood helped the antiwar movement?

Skepticism about the reasons for the war has created a climate of tolerance for the dissenters whom Vice President Spiro Agnew attacked last week. Seventy percent of the leaders refused to buy the argument that opposition to the war is led by radicals

Do you approve of the present rate of troop withdrawals?		Public				Leaders			
		Too Fast %	Too Slow %	About Right %	Not Sure %	Too Fast %	Too Slow %	About Right %	Not Sure %
Nationwide		6	29	49	16	4	38	39	19
East		5	37	42	16	3	45	31	21
Midwest		5	28	51	16	4	35	38	22
South		5	22	58	15	5	28	47	19
West		9	29	45	17	1	45	38	16
Cities		5	40	44	11	3	43	35	19
Suburbs		5	30	44	21	4	36	41	19
Towns and Rural		6	22	54	18	8	22	49	21
Under 30		6	33	49	12	3	42	37	18
30 to 49		6	28	47	19				
50 and over		5	25	53	17	5	30	43	22
White		6	28	49	17	X	X	X	X
Black		4	33	55	8	X	X	X	X
Republicans		6	21	66	17	X	X	X	X
Democrats		7	31	46	16	X	X	X	X
8th grade		5	18	61	16	X	X	X	X
High school		7	27	61	15	X	X	X	X
College		4	36	42	18	X	X	X	X
Public officials		X	X	X	X	4	33	40	23
Members of President's leaders		X	X	X	X	2	66	15	17
Communications leaders		X	X	X	X	2	37	44	17
Business leaders		X	X	X	X	5	29	48	18
Education and religious leaders		X	X	X	X	3	43	34	20
Voluntary organizations		X	X	X	X	3	39	39	19

Q: Is war necessary to resist Communist aggression in Asia?

who do not care what happens to the U.S. Forty-nine percent of the public went along with them.

The leadership also rejected, by a margin of 72% to 20%, the idea that antiwar sentiment is playing too large a part in Nixon's war decisions. The public agreed with the leaders by a margin of 49% to 35%. Majorities of both the public and the leaders felt that the tragedy of the war was that it had divided the American people and agreed that it should be ended because it has kept the country from doing more about its domestic problems. "It's drained too many resources from this country—its manpower, its leadership, its resources," said Isaac Young, mayor of Olivette, Mo. "It's set this country back many years in solving its own problems."

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No Illusions About Saigon

Angered by the intransigence of South Viet Nam's leaders and shocked by tales of graft and corruption, Americans seem to be losing the good will they once felt for their ally. By 42% to 21%, respondents said that the South Vietnamese government has hindered rather than helped the U.S. in its search for peace. The leadership group went the same way, 55% to 20%. Neither the leaders nor the public expressed any illusions about freedom in North Viet Nam, and both agreed that the Hanoi government commands more loyalty from its citizens than the Saigon regime. Said Ralph Comfortes of Los Angeles: "We are supporting a government that has no support from the Buddhists. We don't have the support of the Viet peasant."

Sixty-four percent of the public and 74% of the leaders favored replacing the Thieu government with one more representative of the South Vietnamese people. However, the public found itself nearly evenly divided when asked if it thought that the South Vietnamese army would fight better under a new government, while only a small plurality of the leaders felt it would.

What are acceptable settlement terms?

American attitudes toward the South Vietnamese government have had a profound influence on the type of settlement the country is willing to accept to end the war. While 55% of the leaders and 58% of the public voiced support of the President in maintaining that South Viet Nam's right of self-determination is not negotiable, those polled showed great flexibility on the meaning of the term.

The public would accept a neutralist government, committed neither to the U.S. nor the Communists, by a 71% to 12% margin. However, the public is willing, by 47% to 26%, to sacrifice the present Saigon government if that is the only way to peace, while the leaders, 62% to 22%, are even more agreeable to the idea. The partitioning of South Viet Nam, under which the Viet Cong would rule those parts of the country it controlled and the Saigon government the rest, is supported by a 42% to 29% margin among the people and 53% to 33% among the leaders.

But on the question of whether Communists should be allowed into a new South Vietnamese government, the public and the leaders parted ways decisively. The public opposed letting the Communists into the government 49% to 33%; the leaders favored such a com-

Should the President order a unilateral cease-fire?

	Public			Leaders		
	Favor %	Oppose %	Not Sure %	Favor %	Oppose %	Not Sure %
Nationwide	44	44	12	44	45	11
East	54	33	13	47	39	14
Midwest	45	44	11	52	38	10
South	32	52	16	33	60	7
West	45	47	8	46	43	11
Cities	54	35	11	48	42	10
Suburbs	47	43	10	45	43	12
Towns and rural	38	48	14	32	60	8
Under 30	45	46	9	45	45	10
30 to 49	43	48	9	45	49	10
50 and over	48	37	15	43	45	12
Men	44	48	8	X	X	X
Women	45	39	16	X	X	X
White	43	45	12	X	X	X
Black	56	29	15	X	X	X
Eighth grade	48	36	16	X	X	X
High School	43	46	11	X	X	X
College	45	45	10	X	X	X
Republican	42	47	11	X	X	X
Democrat	46	43	11	X	X	X
Veterans	40	53	7	38	52	10
Voted Nixon	40	49	11	X	X	X
Voted Humphrey	50	39	11	X	X	X
Public officials	X	X	X	42	45	13
Minority and dissident leaders	X	X	X	47	42	11
Communications leaders	X	X	X	48	45	7
Business leaders	X	X	X	40	53	7
Education and religion	X	X	X	49	39	12
Voluntary organizations	X	X	X	45	42	13

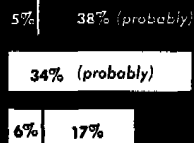
promise 62% to 28%. The public also rejected a government with a Communist majority 62% to 21%. The leaders split, 44% in favor, 45% opposed.

Nixon's Dilemma

Embroiled in a war they cannot win under the rules of engagement and do not wish to lose, Americans find themselves confused as they look to the future. Although most have abandoned hope for a military victory, only a minority expect the Paris negotiations to produce an "honorable settlement."

This contradiction confronts Nixon with riddles as he looks toward 1972. Ninety-four percent of the public and 91% of the leaders say they would support Nixon if he ends the war this year on honorable terms, a condition that seems impossible to meet. Sixty percent of the public and leaders are willing to support him whether he ends the war or not as long as he gets American troops out of Viet Nam. A surprising 52% of the public would be willing to support him in one last-ditch attempt to gain a military victory; 53% of the leaders would oppose such a move. Sixty percent of the leaders and 67% of the public said that they would oppose him if the Communists took over the South Vietnamese government. The fact that a plurality of both public and leaders believe that South Viet Nam will ultimately go Communist anyway only underscores the U.S.'s dilemma—and Nixon's.

Q: After war will South Viet Nam go Communist?



PROTEST

Conflict in the Movement

Looking back on its greatest success—the Oct. 15 Moratorium Day—the multifaceted U.S. peace movement is exhilarated. Looking ahead to its plans for November, it is worried. Can the momentum be sustained? Can violence be avoided? Most of all, will the desire for peace prevail over the movement's tendency to wage internal war over goals and tactics?

Publicly, the factional leaders last week expressed optimism and pledged cooperation—at least through the activities scheduled for Nov. 13, 14 and 15. Yet privately, key participants conceded that a serious split had been narrowly averted and that basic disagreements remained unresolved.

The potential conflict is over how

tend to be older and in some cases more militant and more radical than the Moratorium leadership. Some of them helped organize the protests during the Democratic Convention in Chicago, and they met last summer in Cleveland to plan mass "Marches Against Death" for November in Washington and San Francisco. To many of those active in the "New Mobe," the war is just one of the reasons for protest. They prefer dramatic tactics and appeal particularly to big-city and campus leftists.

Sexy Washington. Those differences posed no real problem until the two groups began to wonder whether the Mobilization's November marches would conflict with the simultaneous two-day Moratorium demonstrations of Nov. 13 and 14. Moratorium leaders were not eager to dilute local activities by en-

Actually, each organization will concentrate almost exclusively on its own plans—and each has its hands full. "We don't want people to say we peaked in October," explains Verne Newton, a coordinator of the Viet Nam Moratorium Committee in New York. "Yet we almost achieved our capacity for mobilizing every possible person against the war then." He concedes that the Washington march, which seeks to rally 45,000 people who will walk single file from Arlington National Cemetery to the Capitol over a period of 36 hours, bearing the names of U.S. war dead and destroyed Vietnamese villages, will lure many demonstrators away from New York. Said Newton: "This is a movement of people and we must go where the people want to go—and right now Washington is sexier." Similar factional arguments over what kind of political spectrum the demonstrations should embrace have broken out in Massachusetts and California.

Peace movement leaders insist that their disagreements are not serious. "Many people prefer to act out their feelings on the war in large rallies," contends Boston's Jerome Grossman, one of the Moratorium's creators. "Others prefer to work on the nitty-gritty local activities. There is no rivalry, just a difference of function." Perhaps. But many leaders in both camps are worried that the November demonstration may be used as a stage for the wild and the ultraradical. In a lengthy mass march, a determined handful could start serious trouble. That could evoke a popular reaction against the entire peace movement.



STUDENT MOBILIZATION COMMITTEE LEADERS*
Midway between exhilaration and worry.

sharply the goals of the peace drive should be focused and how broad a following it should seek. The Viet Nam Moratorium Committee, which organized the Oct. 15 demonstrations, is led mainly by politically oriented moderates and liberals. Created quickly on the strength of a novel idea, it seeks the broadest possible enlistment of public opinion to persuade Congress and the President that U.S. involvement in the war must be ended promptly. Its emphasis is upon campus and community activity to get much of middle America personally involved.

This notion is regarded as too slow and too square by elements of the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Viet Nam, a loose federation comprising representatives of some 50 established groups long allied with peace efforts. They include such diverse organizations as the National Council of Churches, the Socialist Workers Party, the Communist Party of the U.S.A., the Student Mobilization Committee and the Urban Coalition. Its leaders

couraging demonstrators to go to Washington. They also feared that a chaotic Washington protest would taint the whole peace movement and drive moderates out.

A crisis developed when some of the New Mobe's most militant steering-committee members called a hurried meeting in Washington and voted to exclude businessmen and politicians from the speakers' platform for the Washington rally. Too many such men, they argued, had either profited from or approved war appropriations. When Moratorium leaders heard of the action, they met with some of Mobilization's less radical leaders and argued forcefully that such a move would alienate all the politicians and average citizens who had been recruited by M-day. They won the argument. Both groups held press conferences to announce that each supported the other's November plans.

* Lynn Glixon, Washington; Allen Myers, Madison, Wis.; Carol Lipman, Boston; Norman Goldstein, Silver Spring, Md.

THE KENNEDYS Rehearsal for an Inquest

For all of Edward Kennedy's legal efforts to avoid what he fears would be a circus-style inquest into the death of Mary Jo Kopechne, a sort of rehearsal for an inquest was held last week in Pennsylvania's Luzerne County courthouse. Nearly 200 newsmen and spectators jammed into Judge Bernard Brominski's courtroom in Wilkes-Barre to hear arguments on whether Mary Jo's body should be exhumed from a nearby Larksville cemetery for an autopsy. While the proceeding showed that Kennedy's apprehension was well founded, it also indicated that the lack of a post-mortem has contributed to keeping the case alive and controversial.

Edmund Dinis, the Massachusetts district attorney in whose jurisdiction the death occurred last July, seemed determined to compensate—or even over-compensate—for his initial timidity in investigating the biggest case of his life. He allowed his assistant, Armand Fernandes, to hint in the course of cross-examination that Mary Jo might have died from a skull fracture or "manual strangulation" rather than drowning. Summoning such witnesses as Edgartown Police Chief Dominick Arena, Dinis adumbrated some of the testimony